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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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18 November 1963

SUBJECT: Recent Soviet Tactics in the Sino-Soviet Dispute

Summary

The open attack on the Chinese leaders in mid-July 1963--primarily an attempt to place the CPSU in a better position to induce obedience in its camp--has provided Khrushchev with a new advantage in the polemics but has not stopped the spread of Chinese influence in independent parties. The Soviet leader has made an apparent gain in partially disarming the damaging Chinese doctrinal argument, making the Chinese look more chauvinistic than ever before in the eyes of Soviet supporters and thereby balancing off the image of the CPSU as a party led by revisionists with an image of the CCP as one led by hardboiled, self-seeking nationalists. However, his effort to assert discipline among lukewarm Soviet supporters probably has been no more successful than his earlier attempt following the 22nd CPSU congress. Since late 1961, and particularly in 1963, formal splits in some parties have confronted the Soviet factions with organizationally distinct and independent opposition groups (or parties); the Chinese are using these newly formed groups--now members of their minority camp--as organizational rallying points for various types of anti-Soviet dissidents. Chinese pressure and Soviet moves toward a friendlier relationship with the U.S. have driven at least one on-balance Chinese supporter, the Vietnamese party, to side more unequivocally with the CCP. The Russians are increasingly compelled to use varying degrees of delicacy and to make concessions to other on-balance Chinese supporters to prevent

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further erosion of Soviet influence among them. Their inability to gain wide acceptance of a formal joint anti-Chinese declaration, which would be drafted at an international conference of parties, appears to be the major consideration in the Soviet decision to avoid such a conference at this time, and their next move may be to engage the Chinese in bilateral talks--the lesser of two evils.

Recent Soviet Tactics in the Sino-Soviet Dispute

In the course of the Sino-Soviet dispute prior to mid-1963, the Chinese scored more effectively than the Russians in the polemics during each of the vigorous stages of recrimination. The massive Soviet initiative carried forward at party congresses of Khrushchev's major allies--the Bulgarian in November 1962, the Hungarian also in November, the Italian in December, the Czech also in December, and the East German attended by Khrushchev in January 1963--failed to silence the Chinese. On the contrary, it spurred the Chinese leaders to another counter-attack, implicitly but effectively directed against Khrushchev's revisionism and "betrayal" of the cause of world revolution. The Chinese declared in February 1963 that the attempt of "certain comrades" to attack the CCP and then call for an immediate halt to polemics in order to prevent the CCP from responding "will never work." That is, they refused to provide Khrushchev with the respite he desired from their damaging attacks and with the tactical advantage of saying the last word (at the East German congress in January) and then calling for bilateral talks (in the CPSU letter in February). As their counter-attack developed following receipt of the February letter from the CPSU, the Chinese leaders seemed considerably self-assured that they still had the polemical weapons to hurt Khrushchev, and they proceeded to use them. However, Khrushchev opened a new stage in the dispute with the publication of the 14 July CPSU "open letter;" ever since that stage was opened, the Russians have criticized Chinese policies more effectively than at any time during the various periods of polemics beginning in April 1960.

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The Russian attack has been facilitated by its new directness--open criticism of Mao and of the real Chinese motivation in the argument.

The Russians have moved openly to deny Mao the sanctuary he has had as a "great" leader and theorist, above public criticism. (His ideas had been attacked privately since mid-1960.) Ever since the 20th CPSU congress, Soviet open attacks on Stalin's personality cult had been only implicitly attacks on Mao's. Not until November 1961 was the personality cult "in China" directly attacked, but even then in a relatively restrained way, by a Czech leader (Siroky), and without follow-up, as the reference was deleted before it was extensively publicized in the Czech press. Even Khrushchev's indirect dig at Mao--a leader who believes he was "sent by God, and that the people are a mass who must listen and applaud"--was deleted from the public version of his 21 June 1963 speech to the CPSU Plenum. However, in the July "open letter," the Russians questioned Chinese motives in "openly exalting the personality cult;" by September, they cited several of Mao's more ridiculous statements in a highly critical context; and by October, an editorial in Kommunist for the first time explicitly linked his name with the personality cult in China ("the deification of Mao Tse-tung") and attacked his pretensions to have "created" a distinct ideology ("Mao Tse-tungism"). The Soviet effort, in short, seems to be intended not only to heap ridicule on a man who has become a ridiculous figure, but also to reduce the international prestige that Mao, as a "contributor" to doctrine, has gained for the CCP in the last two decades.

The Russians have made it difficult for the Chinese to defend Mao's statements. The attempt of the Chinese to set the record "straight" regarding just what Mao had said in his confabulated speech in Moscow in November 1957* was decisively turned against them by the Russians in the Soviet Government Statement:**

*People's Daily, 1 September 1963

**Pravda, in two parts, 21-22 September 1963.

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This is what Mao Tse-tung actually said: "In China construction has not gotten underway in earnest. If imperialists impose a war, we shall be prepared to terminate the construction; let us first have a trial of strength and then return to construction." It will be clear to everyone that this pronouncement has an absolutely different meaning. What does the call "let us first have a trial of strength and then return to construction" mean? Is this a call to peace, to the struggle for peaceful coexistence? In essence this means exactly orientation toward an armed conflict, toward a military solution of the contradictions between socialism and capitalism. And no one would succeed in presenting this orientation as a slip of the tongue.

That the Russian effort is apparently considered by the Chinese as damaging to Mao's image is suggested by the fact that they have not reprinted the Soviet Government Statement thus far, they have refrained from further discussion of his November 1957 speech, and they are even wary about referring to his platitudinous "paper tiger" concept at this time. In the 21 October 1963 joint People's Daily-Red Flag article, they were careful to avoid referring to the "big-wig" William II as a "paper tiger," resorting to a description of him as "a snowman in the sun." The Soviet effort to depict Mao as war-crazed has been almost as effective as the Chinese effort to demonstrate Khrushchev's complicity in Stalin's purges of the mid-1930s.

The new Soviet attack has concentrated more on actual Chinese policies than doctrinal positions. Whereas in 1961-62 the Russian follow-up of Khrushchev's 22nd CPSU congress assault on the Albanians was centered primarily on defending doctrinal positions which the Chinese were criticizing, since July 1963 the Soviets have probed to the roots of Chinese political motivation, first hinting at a purely nationalist motivation and then demonstrating the nature of the motivation. Thus, the CPSU has deprived the Chinese of the advantage they had gained in 1960 by exposing the

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CCP's "revolutionary" strategy as precisely concordant with such national goals as creating pressure on and sustaining tension with the U.S. at all times, eventually acquiring nuclear weapons, and justifying their actions along the Sino-Indian border by denigrating Nehru's claim to be non-aligned. The 14 July Soviet "open letter" first indicated that the Russians had decided not to continue the argument as though it were merely a matter of doctrinal purity--a matter on which they were losing ground--but to turn instead to the realpolitik behind the Chinese positions, hammering away at the nationalist motivations:

...is it a fact that behind the rumpus about the 'world revolution' raised by the Chinese comrades there are other goals which have nothing in common with revolution?

The 21-22 September Soviet Government Statement went a step further, making the point explicit: "Facts show that, far from advancing the interests of the peoples fighting for socialism and national liberation, the Chinese leaders pursue their own great-power aims." The October 1963 Kommunist editorial made the most extreme accusation: Peiping's "peculiar...platform...in the sphere of foreign policy is an orientation toward maintaining international tension which is considered a propitious environment for the realization of hegemonic plans [among backward countries] which are then camouflaged with slogans of 'world revolution.'" The Russians have had no difficulty in demonstrating their general thesis when discussing the matter of the partial test-ban treaty and the Sino-Indian border dispute, effectively turning Chinese charges of great-nation chauvinism against their originator by giving a "factual" account of China's special interests.

To counter the explicit Chinese charge that the Soviet leaders are revisionists, the Russians have made the implicit accusation that the Chinese leaders, in trying to "amend" Lenin, are in fact revisionists themselves. They were quick to turn the assertion made in the 4 March 1963 Red Flag editorial--the assertion that the united front in some countries could include "certain patriotically minded

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kings, princes and aristocrats"--against the sanctimonious Chinese, commenting sarcastically in the CPSU "open letter" as follows:

And after this, the leadership of the CCP teaches the world Communist movement that the proletarian, class approach to the problems in hand must never, under any circumstances, be forfeited!

While you-are-revisionists-too is not a tactically strong line of argument, the Russians apparently believe that it bolsters their effort to expose the Chinese leaders as opportunists hardly worthy of the self-designated title, "pure" Leninists.

Generally, the Chinese responses have not been as effective in countering the Russians on policy matters as they had been on the debate about Leninism. They have been unable to credibly deny that they have opposed the test-ban treaty and attacked the Indians for reasons precisely relevant to China's interests rather than the interests of the entire movement. When, in combination with their attack on these Chinese policies, the Russians moved to make Mao look reckless on the matter of nuclear war and callous on the matter of the anticipated "ruins" of civilization, the Chinese leaders for the first time since the days of exaltation over the success of the Long Live Leninism articles began to act and speak in a manner which suggested they had been maneuvered out of position in the polemical quarrel. Although they tried to add more weight to their ripostes by issuing two statements in August attributed to Mao, and directed toward Soviet weak points--i.e., Khrushchev's silence on the U.S. racial issue (Mao's statement of 8 August) and the situation in South Vietnam (Mao's

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statement of 29 August),* the international attention these statements attracted was soon dissipated as the Russians continued to hammer more explicitly on Mao's "urge for war." The Chinese leaders' self-confidence in their debating ability was sustained as late as 1 September, when Peiping's government statement declared: "...we hope you will have the courage to argue the matter out with us." When, however, by a clever selection of fanatical Chinese statements and by subtle distortion, the Russians moved to create an image of reckless leadership in China, Peiping's self-assurance began to fall away. The Chinese began to complain that they were being described, unfairly, as "madmen obsessed with a war itch" by "Khrushchev and company, who are now playing dirty tricks with quotations."** Almost pathetically, they suggested that the Russians "should not create confusion over the word 'ruins' and keep nagging about it," that "It is premature for the evil-doers to be beside themselves with joy,"*** and "Why do the Soviet leaders deliberately single out the relaxed situation on The Sino-Indian border to make such a fuss about?...do not rejoice too soon. Revolutionary China can never be

*Mao's statements are not written in his usual lively and metaphoric style. However, we believe they are from his own hand, or at least authorized by him. On two occasions, Mao has struck out with considerable verve, trying to say something new on policy and doctrine (in February 1957 and March 1958); but on both occasions, he was soon compelled to alter significantly or suppress his original remarks because of disastrous practical consequences. In August 1963, he apparently decided to be cautious and maintain a sober tone, avoiding the type of metaphoric and wild assertions which since 1957 have contributed to the international image of him as a blunderer.

**Red Flag, 6 September 1963.

***Red Flag, 6 September 1963.

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isolated."* A further indication that the Soviet tactic begun in mid-July 1963 may have neutralized the previous Chinese advantage in the polemic is the Chinese decision to reply in an extensive series of articles, rather than just one or two.

* * * *

Despite gains in the polemic, the Russians have not been able to impede the gradual erosion of CPSU hegemony in the world Communist movement. The tactic used in the open attack on the Chinese leaders in mid-July 1963 and thereafter was primarily an effort by Khrushchev to place the CPSU in a better position to induce obedience in its camp. The concluding section of the 14 July Soviet "open letter," which discusses the specific splitting activity of the Chinese among various Free World parties, suggests Khrushchev's concern with Peiping's success thus far and his determination to deny the Chinese leaders any further

*People's Daily, 1 November 1963

Chinese depiction of Nehru as a "reactionary" has been brushed aside by the Russians as insufficient justification for China's policy toward India, and inaccurate in any case. The 19 September 1963 Pravda article on the Sino-Indian border dispute is a clear-cut attack on Chinese policy. It is virtually devoid of doctrinal arguments and grossly distorts the Chinese position, attributing to New Delhi rather than Peiping a desire to negotiate. Privately, however, Khrushchev has indicated that he knows the real positions of both sides. He told [redacted]

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[redacted] that "China wants to talk and reach an agreement with you." The fact that the 1 November 1963 People's Daily editorial exposes Khrushchev's hypocrisy will not deter the Russians from pillorying the Chinese on the border dispute, and will compel Peiping to remain on the defensive regarding the dispute.

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opportunity to expand CCP influence in the movement. The Soviet intention to reverse the trend unfavorable to CPSU authority by employing the weapon of open condemnation is clear from the following passage in the "open letter:"

The splitting activity of the Chinese leadership in the ranks of the international Communist movement evokes rightful indignation and rebuff by fraternal Marxist-Leninist parties.

The subsequent "rebuff" by various parties showed not so much that the Russian camp was still the majority camp--a point not denied by the Chinese--but that this majority probably has not been increased. By their own count,* the Russian majority is 65:

Up to this time, already 65 Communist parties have condemned the views and actions of the Chinese splitters in the official resolutions of their leading organs and have expressed complete solidarity with and support for the principled position of the CPSU in its struggle for the ideological purity of revolutionary theory and unity in the Communist ranks.

However, this figure may not be accurate. As of mid-November 1963, the number of parties known to have supported the CPSU position in official resolutions, editorials, or speeches is 53. The Russians in 1963 may have been no more successful in prodding their lukewarm supporters and the neutrals into public condemnations of the Chinese than they had been in the period 1961-62 following the 22nd CPSU congress regarding condemnation of the "Albanians." On the contrary, since the congress, the Russians have lost some ground in the Venezuelan party, lost more ground in the Vietnamese and New Zealand parties, and failed to prevent

*Kommunist editorial, October 1963.

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splits in the Belgian, Ecuadoran, and Australian parties from being formalized.* In the Belgian party, pro-Chinese factionalists who were expelled in April 1963 are now using Chinese funds and are creating more trouble for the Russians as dissidents than before the split. In the Ecuadoran party, formal disciplinary action against the Chinese supporters in spring 1963 and government arrest of a Soviet supporter (Saad) in July has left the underground party machine virtually in the control of the pro-Piping group. In the Australian party, formal action against several central committee members in June 1963 drove the dissidents into a group which, using Chinese funds, is now moving to develop a distinct organizational machine to compete with the Moscow-oriented party. In addition to the three parties whose formal expulsion of dissidents has led to formation of separate opposition groups, the Brazilian party, which expelled its "dogmatic group" in November 1961, and the Mexican, French, and Italian parties are other important parties in which the Chinese have won significant support; in fact, almost every party in the world movement now has a Chinese faction.

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The Russians are troubled by these and prospective splits. [REDACTED] is reported to have stated in August 1963 that the Soviet leaders do not want a split in the Indian "or any other party," as they believe these splits strengthen Piping's hand, enabling the Chinese to claim they have supporters in all countries. [REDACTED] 25X1C

[REDACTED] the Soviet leaders were even willing to make some concessions to the leftists in order to preserve the party as a single organization, preventing the Chinese from completely influencing any separate organizational group. It is precisely this consideration which now serves as a guideline for the primary Soviet tactical plan directed toward handling individual parties which have a strong Chinese faction but which are not formally split.

*Expelled members of the Paraguayan party apparently are also organizing a distinct opposition group (or party) loyal to Piping.

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In their attempt to maintain some degree of Soviet influence in these parties, the Russians have been careful not to dictate but rather to make concessions, even in the face of opposition from CPSU supporters. For example, when Communist members of the Italian delegation to the Congress of the Women's International Democratic Federation complained to Ponomarev in Moscow in late June 1963 that the Russians had not supported the Italians in their denunciation of reports submitted by the Japanese and Cuban delegations, this Soviet foreign party liaison official described his tactics:

The leaders of the CCP are no longer to be considered as leaders of a Leninist party. They are engaging in a continuous action of provocation and of division in the world Communist movement. Our principal concern today is to isolate the Chinese. You /Italian Communists/ with your demonstration /against the Japanese and Cuban reports/ have, although involuntarily, played the game of the Chinese. We agree with you that the Japanese and Cuban reports are extremist and have no respect for the present historical situation, but we had both reports read and approved because if they had been rejected also with the vote of the USSR and the people's democracies, the Japanese and Cubans would have largely gone over to the Chinese side.

Careful handling of a party with a strong Chinese faction --the Japanese--was also demonstrated by the Soviet delegation to the Ninth World Rally for the Prohibition of Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held in Tokyo in early August 1963. Delegation chief G. Zhukov is reliably reported to have refused to align his delegation with that of the Japanese Socialists because he hoped to avoid taking a stand in opposition to the Japanese Communists at the rally. Later, while attacking the Chinese vigorously, the Soviet delegation demonstrated considerable forbearance with such Chinese supporters as the delegates from Ceylon and North Korea, stating that the USSR was confident of their "good sense as Marxist-Leninists," and implying the need to

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isolate the Chinese on the issue of disarmament. Regarding such neutrals* as the Cubans, the Russians have criticized their equivocation primarily by proxy, using statements made proxy, using statements made by their supporters in the French and Paraguayan parties, particularly the warning of the latter (publicized by Moscow on 30 September) that to refuse to take sides and to talk about "two groups" in the movements "means to assist those who are trying to split our movement..."

* * * * *

Reports regarding the probability of a Soviet-initiated international conference of parties being held in Moscow suggest that the Russians in September and October had discussed with their supporters the idea of invoking discipline on the CCP in the form of a joint declaration condemning Chinese opposition to the "common line" of the movement. Although among the CPSU's allies the French desired a conference, the Italians reportedly opposed the idea privately on the grounds that a formal anti-Chinese joint declaration would represent "a return to Stalinism." Publicly,** they objected that a meeting would "inevitably lead to a break or an unsatisfactory formal compromise," and the East Germans asserted*** that "such a conference might do more harm than good, for if it were to result in

*"Neutrals" refers to those parties, the Cuban and Venezuelan, which have balanced their lukewarm support for certain Soviet positions with favorable references to certain Chinese positions, but which have supported neither camp entirely in 1963.

**Oggi In Italia radio version of 25 October Italian party statement.

***Gerhart Eisler comment in broadcast of 4 November.

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a formal schism that would not be good." There is some possibility that the Soviet leaders had decided by September or even earlier that an international conference with or without the Chinese present would work to Peiping's advantage, as CCP supporters and the neutrals would defend its right to reject Soviet and majority dictation. Although a conference without the Chinese could be more easily manipulated to Soviet advantage during proceedings, any resulting anti-Chinese joint declaration could not be imposed on the Chinese camp (or even on some Soviet supporters), and would therefore not carry the authority of a really international--that is, unanimously accepted--document. Assuming Soviet awareness of these difficulties, publication in Pravda in September and October of statements made by various parties or their spokesmen may have been intended as a display of CPSU responsiveness to appeals for an international conference and to arguments against such a conference. Thus the apparent decision to postpone an international conference, as expressed by the Italians and East Germans, may have been intended to appear as one arrived at in a fairminded way, having taken into consideration the differing views.

The next Soviet move in the dispute may be to accept the lesser of two evils by engaging the Chinese again in bilateral talks. Failure of a second round of bilateral negotiations to result in any accommodation of the CPSU and CCP positions would then provide the Russians, who have on occasion pointed out to other parties the need for successful "preparatory work"--that is, CPSU-CCP talks--with another argument for postponing indefinitely an international conference.

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